

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION ORDERS DISTRICT GAS RATE INCREASED TO 95 CENTS

WAR AGAINST SKYROCKETING OF D. C. RENTS

Realtors Tell Clients Unreasonable Raising Will Bring Draconic Laws in Revaluation.

By BILL PRICE.

Conservative real estate men are already beginning to pass word to their clients that reckless and unreasonable increases in rents in Washington, following the decision of Judge Gould that the Salisbury act is unconstitutional, will be the worst thing that ever happened to legitimate real estate interests, and may bring down upon Washington stringent laws by Congress that will handicap real estate here for years to come, in addition to giving the opportunity for widespread lambasting of this city in legislative halls.

The District Commissioners today were giving serious thought to the situation, inasmuch as skyrocketing of rents will upset things in this city to a degree that it is difficult now to conceive. Appeals will be made to the Commissioners, and Congress will find pleasure in flaying the whole city for the money-grabbing propensities of a few.

Commissioner Gardiner was very frank about the matter today, throwing out a pointed hint to real estate operators that they must not allow greedy landlords to run away with things.

Future Rents With Realtors.

"I have been satisfied for a long time that the Salisbury act is unconstitutional," said Mr. Gardiner. "My study of the law convinced me of that months ago. From a strictly legal standpoint it interferes with and destroys contractual rights. Much has been said about the real estate men of Washington as to exploiting and alleged unfair dealings. This was never true as a whole. They are not responsible for conditions that existed here. This decision of Judge Gould, however, puts a new twist up to the real estate men with no law to control or regulate their operations except that of supply and demand, the results upon which the future will be judged. I am satisfied that the results will show conclusively that these men as a whole will deal fairly with the people. That they have done so in the past I am confident."

Gould's Decision Not Final.

There is a tendency almost everywhere to regard the decision of Judge Gould as final, and this virtually amounts to a permanent bench mark. Thousands of tenants who were retained in their homes by decisions of the Municipal Court that the Salisbury act was valid and furnished protection against eviction and rent-raising.

It must be remembered that Judge Gould's decision is not that of the entire Supreme Court bench. It is a ruling, however, to a large extent the thousands of cases that were passed upon remain in status quo pending final decision by the Court of Appeals of the District.

There should be no frigate on the part of tenants until the Court of Appeals does act. It is generally believed today in judicial and legal circles that the latter court soon will hand down a decision, touching the question of constitutionality. The court has before it the exact issues that were decided by Judge Gould. When that decision is made it will be time enough to consider everything settled.

The Rights of Tenants.

Eminent lawyers today stated that all cases passed upon by the Municipal Court, in which decisions were made favorable to tenants, cannot now be revived, unless appeals were taken by landlords. Also the parties would stand in statu quo until the Supreme Court hears the cases as a whole, or the Court of Appeals renders final decision.

There are a number of appeals by landlords before the Supreme Court. It is possible for these landlords to file motions for judgment before the Supreme Court and if that happens a whole backs Judge Gould the motions would probably be granted. It is still possible, however, for the tenant to continue appeals to higher courts.

What Municipal Court May Do.

It is entirely discretionary with the judges of the Municipal Court whether they will follow Judge Gould's decision in landlord and tenant cases that may come before them from now on, or which may be pending before them. The judges may follow their own decisions of the past, although it is customary for the lower court to fall in line with decisions above it.

In these cases the Municipal Court may or may not stand pat on its former position until the Court of Appeals has acted. That being the highest local court its decisions are final unless appealed to the United States Supreme Court.

While tenants have recourse to appeals pending final judgment by the Court of Appeals the process is a costly one. The tenant must give bond guaranteeing to pay all accrued rentals and the costs of the suit.

Salisbury Law Soon to Die.

The Salisbury law, which received a solar plexus from Judge Gould, would die a natural death anyhow so soon as peace is proclaimed with Germany and Austria. It terminates with the signing of a peace treaty. While it is true that the law has

WEDDED 2 MONTHS;
TIRED ALREADY



MRS. GERTRUDE WINGATE PORTER.

protected many deserving and honest tenants it has been used by many unworthy persons to escape payment of fair rentals and to defy the landlords in every possible way. Its benefits were good on the whole, it is believed.

Real estate men today believed that there will be a general trend upward of rents for residential properties when the legal situation clears sufficiently to do so. Considerable ill feeling is going to result and "moving day" will be every day, as things now look.

Will Bring About Building.

One good result of the decision of Judge Gould will be to bring about a resumption of building in Washington, in the view of many real estate men, including Charles W. Fairfax, who is president of the Real Estate Brokers' Association.

The idea is that tenants will refuse to pay higher rents if they can buy or build homes of their own. Much will depend upon how high rents are raised. That will depend a good deal upon individual landlords. Many of them are reasonable and fair in all things they do, with consideration for their tenants. Others will care for nothing except the almighty dollar and will use their power outrageously and unfairly.

Landlords Now Sole Judge.

Conservative men today regretted that there is not in existence some tribunal to which may be referred outrageous and unfair treatment by either side. As the matter now stands, when the Court of Appeals finally acts, and in the event it declares the law unconstitutional, the landlord will be the sole judge of what is right in the matter of money-grabbing.

Houses are by no means easy to be had, although there are more of them than when the armistice was agreed upon. The population of Washington has not decreased more than 6,000 since the signing of the armistice. It will decrease considerably more than this after July 1.

Wedded only two months, Mrs. Gertrude Wingate Porter, of 419 Seventh street northeast, has filed suit for maintenance against George F. Porter, declaring he deserted her, and that since the wedding she has only received \$50 from him, although his salary as chief clerk of the supply division of the War Department is \$200 a month.

Porter and his first wife, Mrs. Jennie M. Porter, of 1902 Fourteenth street northwest, were divorced November 8, last.

"Then Porter professed his love for me," said the second Mrs. Porter, and we went to Rockville on January 6 and were married."

In her bill Mrs. Porter charges that her husband is a "regular visitor to the house of his divorced wife."

ENDS LIFE TO ESCAPE FROM INCOME TAX

"I'll Never Live to Make Out Another," Is Declaration of William Smoot.

Shortly after declaring he would not live to make out another income tax, William A. Smoot, forty-six years old, was found dead today in his room at his home, 606 I street southeast, with a bullet in his temple.

Smoot, who was an engineer, often had threatened to end his life, according to his wife, Mrs. Sarah Smoot. He had appeared worried over the income tax, and according to his wife had lost money on horse races. His body was found by his wife, who went to his room on hearing the report of a revolver.

"My husband has for the past three weeks worried over his income tax," Mrs. Smoot told a Times reporter today. "Often when he came home from work, in the morning he would talk continually of the tax."

"I will never live another year to make out my income tax," Smoot said to his wife upon coming home from work this morning. A few minutes later she found his lifeless body.

D. C. YANK, 'DEAD,'
HOME WITH MEDAL

Once reported killed in action, Private Maurice Schultz, 418 Lury place northwest, has returned home with several battle scars and a citation for bravery.

His mother, Mrs. Lydia B. Schultz, received word from the War Department in October that he had been wounded severely. Later she heard from soldiers overseas that he had been killed and newspapers printed the report of his death.

Private Schultz, after serving with the District Guard on the Mexican border, left for France with Company C, 101st Infantry, on December 12, 1918. He was then transferred to Company I, 26th regiment, First Division, the regiment of which "Teddy" Roosevelt, Jr., was lieutenant colonel. Private Schultz kept a record of his battles on the bag containing his gas mask. He was in action at Catigny, Soissons, Chateau Thierry and at the Marne.

He went over the top for the first time and the last time at the turning point of the war, Chateau Thierry, on July 18. Within fifteen minutes he saw three of his closest friends shot dead at his side. He was gassed, and as he struggled for breath a machine gun bullet plowed through his thigh, tearing the muscles from the bone. A bit of shrapnel hit him in the back of the head and he fell. For two hours he lay on the field. He was then carried to a first aid station.

SUES FOR \$10,000
FOR HUSBAND'S LOVE

Ten thousand dollars damages are asked by Mrs. Julia S. Borowski in a suit filed today against Iola Trueworthy for alleged alienation of the affections of her husband, Stephen J. Borowski.

Mrs. Borowski, who is represented by Attorney George E. Sullivan and J. C. Mattingly, alleges that March 15, 1917, Miss Trueworthy came between her and her husband "deprived her of his affection, fellowship, and society, alienated his love and destroyed her happiness and home."

Hurdy-Gurdy Run By Man of Draft Age Here Proves War Is Over

Official Washington has been unofficially informed that the war is over. For the last week an Italian of draft age has been operating a "hurdy-gurdy" around the streets where many of the Government buildings are located. General Crowder, the man who ruled that such things as operating a "hurdy-gurdy" were non-essential occupations, stopped and smiled when he saw the Italian.

THIS HEN'S FATHER MUST BE OSTRICH

When is "a egg" not "a egg"? In Northeast Washington there lives an egg—so-called—laid by a chicken who threatens to outclass the proverbial goose which laid the golden egg.

The egg is called an egg because it can't be denied that it was because of a chicken. It resembles an ordinary chicken egg in general shapelessness. But there the resemblance stops. It's a sort of a super-egg.

The egg, which is owned by Mrs. Horace Darling, 408 Eleventh street northeast, is 8 1/2 by 5 1/2 inches in circumference. This is more than an inch and a half larger than the normal hen's egg, according to the Department of Agriculture. The measurements, incidentally, are said to be "eggs-actly" correct.

The egg's mother, a German town, Md., biddy, has a habit of laying a whole of an egg every day. Some of them are double yolkers. Her owner, Mrs. Horace Bennett, doesn't know how she does it. Perhaps biddy is egged on by previous experiences.

Miss Mrs. Hen, who is about two years old, began laying huge eggs last summer.

Nothing is insinuated, but the fact remains that Germantown, Md., is not yet dry.

"GOT ME RIGHT," SAYS
BOOTLEGGER; THEY DID

"You got me right, boss," declared Oliver James, alleged bootlegger when arrested by Sgt. S. W. Burke after he had sold two half-pint flasks of whiskey to a police agent.

James told the truth—he got him right, as he was convicted before Judge Harrison in Police Court and sentenced to a year in the District jail on violation of the Sheppard law. "Slip me a half pint," a police agent suggested to William J. Logan, colored, in a near-beer saloon, as he eyed the negro a marked dollar bill and a quarter.

Logan did the "slipping," and later pleaded guilty of bootlegging before Judge Harrison, and was sentenced to spend a year in the jail.

BURNED BY WATER BOTTLE; WOMAN SUES HOSPITAL

George Washington University Hospital was made defendant in a suit for \$10,000 damages, filed yesterday by Mrs. Louise L. Souder, who was a patient at the hospital in May, 1918.

Mrs. Souder alleges that her leg was burned by a hot water bottle when she was a patient in the operating ward of the institution. The bottle was so hot, according to the bill, that her leg was burned practically to the bone. Attorneys Wilton J. Lambert and Rudolph H. Yeatman represent Mrs. Souder.

SUES STANDARD OIL FOR \$10,000.

Samuel Leigh McDaniel, administrator of the estate of his father, Samuel B. McDaniel, has filed suit against the Standard Oil Company for \$10,000 damages alleging that November 22 last a motor truck, the company's, fatally injured McDaniel as he was crossing Pennsylvania avenue at Eighth street northwest. McDaniel died shortly afterwards.

WIVES PICKET HOTEL TO AID STRIKING MEN

Waiters Give Out Cards Presenting Their Side In Dispute With Raleigh.

Wives of striking waiters of the Raleigh Hotel, who walked out last week when the manager of the hotel refused to enter into a contract with the Washington Waiters' Union, today are picketing in front of the hotel.

The first woman to appear to picket was Mrs. Anna Begelman, wife of Harry Begelman, of 1344 Sixth street northwest.

The women picketers are carrying signs which read: "I am the wife of a locked out union waiter. My children want to eat."

Max Holder, of the Washington Waiters' Union, Local No. 781, who is in charge of the picketing, told The Times today that the women would picket until the waiters won. "Even if it takes a year to win out, we will continue to picket," Mr. Holder said.

Last week the management of the hotel refused to sign a contract presented by the waiters. Contemplating a strike, colored waiters were employed. On Tuesday the colored waiters began work.

Small cards are being given out by picketers. The cards read: "We, the waiters of this hotel, present to you our grievance against Mr. Weston, the manager, for his arbitrary refusal to deal with the Waiters' Union. The Raleigh Hotel has locked out the white union waiters and put scabs in their places."

1-LEGGED, HE WANTS 1-LEGGED HERO AIDE

A 1-legged ex-soldier to solicit work; no experience needed, just gall and a gift of gab; call mornings.

This is the advertisement which was inserted in The Times by J. D. Sullivan, crippled hero of Spanish-American war fame and descendant of American sailors who fought in the Revolution and in the war of 1812.

Sullivan was a top-sergeant of engineers in the army with Spain; and also served as private, corporal and sergeant of infantry and artillery.

Sullivan lost one leg from wounds received in battle; the other leg, struck in the knee by a Spanish mauler bullet, is imprisoned in a steel casing.

Sullivan's grandfather, John Dixon, was a gunner on the Niagara, in Perry's epic battle with the British on Lake Erie; and Sullivan is also a descendant of Captain Sullivan, who served with the doughty Continental fleet, which harassed British shipping in the Revolutionary war.

"I am drawing \$40 a month and have a wife and child to support," Sullivan told The Times. "My pension isn't enough to support my family and myself, so I am going into the painting business at 221 Pennsylvania avenue northwest. My concern is going to be known as 'Sully's Soldiers' Sign Shop.'"

ST. PATRICK'S DANCE AT STORE.

The Woodward and Lothrop's Employees' Association will give a St. Patrick's Day dance in the auditorium of the store Monday night. This will be the second of a series of dances to be given by the association.

The "Jardin Music" orchestra has been engaged. L. E. Fronani, president of the association, will be in charge. John Jones rendered a verdict of "accidental death."

She's Helping Her Striking Waiter Husband



MRS. ANNA BEGELMAN.

The first woman picket in the waiters' strike, took her place in a downpour of rain in front of the Raleigh Hotel today and while being photographed by The Times, said: "My husband was a waiter. Now he is idle. My two nephews, just back from fighting in France, also are out of work. I have two children, one seven years old and the other eleven. They must be fed."

PAYS WITH HIS LIFE FOR STEP IN DARK

When William A. Laiguel, 503 B street southeast, miscalculated in the dark the distance between two trains yesterday, he made a mistake which cost him his life and left a wife and six small children to earn their own livelihood.

Laiguel was thrown beneath a moving car when he stepped from one train to another at Bay View Junction, Md., at 3 o'clock yesterday morning. Both his legs were severed. He died at Mercy Hospital, Baltimore.

When Laiguel was picked up following the accident, he was rushed to Baltimore in a special train in a fruitless attempt to save his life.

"I'm hurt," he said, "I'm hurt," is all Laiguel said between the time of the accident and the time of his death.

The body was brought to Washington after a coroner's jury rendered a verdict of "accidental death."

NEW PRICE TO BE EFFECTIVE SIX MONTHS

Companies to Charge 5 Cents More Per 1,000 Feet Beginning March 20.

An increase in the price of gas in the District from 90 cents a thousand cubic feet to 95 cents a thousand cubic feet, was ordered by the Public Utilities Commission of the District today.

The increase in the price of gas will be for a period of six months beginning March 20 and ending September 19.

This decision by the Utilities Commission affects the Washington Gas Light Company and the Georgetown Gas Light Company. Both companies petitioned the commission for an increase in rates November 21, 1918. On Tuesday, March 7, a public hearing on the petition of the gas companies was held by the Utilities Commission.

Official Order.

The official order issued by the Public Utilities Commission reads:

"That the rate to be charged for gas furnished by a public utility to any private consumer in the District of Columbia, for lighting, heating, power, or for any other purpose, shall not exceed 95 cents per one thousand cubic feet.

"That this rate shall apply uniformly to all private consumers in the District of Columbia, whether supplied with gas by the Washington Gas Light Company or by the Georgetown Gas Light Company.

"That this rate shall apply to all gas furnished from March 20, 1919, to September 20, 1919.

"That on September 20, 1919, the rate shall be restored automatically to 90 cents per one thousand cubic feet, unless on or before said date the commission shall have ordered otherwise."

Penalty Charge.

Another clause in the order by the commission reads: "That if any private consumer of gas shall not pay monthly any gas bill within ten days after the same shall have been presented, the gas company may charge and collect from said consumer 10 cents additional for each one thousand cubic feet of gas represented in said bill, as now required by law."

Reasons Cited.

Accompanying the official order changing the rate was a statement by the Public Utilities Commission citing several reasons why the change is necessary.

After showing a table compiled by the commission which gives the expenses of the two gas companies, the commission stated: "This table shows, that under the above assumption, the companies must receive 95 cents per thousand cubic feet for all gas sold to private consumers in order to yield a return of 8 per cent on the value of the investment, the opinion of the commission, this price is just and reasonable for a limited period not exceeding six months. It is true that it ignores a probable reduction in the price of coal, but the expiration of the six months period, but on the other hand it makes no allowance for the difference between what the companies actually earned since January 1, 1918, and what they would have earned had the rates been sufficient to yield a 6 per cent return during that period."

In one part of the statement the commission compares the amount of dividends of the gas companies and that of the Potomac Electric Power Company. It reads:

"In the decision in the Potomac Electric Power case, order No. 223, the commission held that rates which would yield a return of 7 per cent on the fair value of the property of the company that was used and useful in the service of the public, were just and reasonable. The business of manufacturing and distributing gas, as far as the risk to the investor is concerned, is quite similar to that of manufacturing and distributing electric current for light and power, so that if 7 per cent represents a fair rate of return for an electric power company, a similar rate should be allowed for a gas company."

Under the present abnormal conditions, however, the Commission feels that the burdens imposed by the war should not be borne wholly by the consumer, but should be divided between the utility and the consumer. Therefore, while the Commission adheres to its opinion that under normal conditions a 7 per cent return should be allowed gas and electric companies in order that capital for necessary extensions may be readily obtained, it is also of the opinion that until normal conditions are restored, rates for service of this character which will yield a return of 6 per cent are reasonable and in no sense confiscatory."

PLAYMATE FIRES GUN;
BOY MAY LOSE EYE

Never more will Jay Hall, Jr., twelve years old, 121 Eleventh street northeast, play with an air rifle.

It's "dangerous business," believes young Hall, who today lies in a darkened room at his home, threatened with the loss of an eye from a bullet wound inflicted by an air rifle in the hands of a playmate.

Arthur Ford, 1110 Eleventh street, discharged the shot, which struck the boy on the nose, glancing into his right eye.

